Corporation for National and Community Service

2010 Social Innovation Fund

Jobs for the Future, Inc.

Reviewer Comments – Phase 2

# SOCIAL INNOVATION FUND 2010

# EVALUATION CONSENSUS FORM

*Instructions throughout this form are indicated in* **red.**

**Before you begin, please fill out the Applicant Name and Application ID# in the above header.**
This Evaluation Consensus Form (ECF) is where each panel records its consensus assessment of an application. The completion of this form may be led by any panelist; that individual will be designated the Lead Reviewer (LR). All Reviewers are expected to serve as the LR on at least two applications. **The evaluation consensus assessment should be based on the panel's examination of only the subcategories highlighted in red in the chart below,** *not* **the full application. In addition, Evaluation Reviewers should only assess how well applicants responded to the** *specific* **evidence-based criteria within the subcategories highlighted in yellow in this form.**

| Category | Percentage | Subcategories |
|---|---|---|
| Program Design | 45% | A. Goals and Objectives |
| | | B. Use of Evidence |
| | | C. Community Resources |
| | | D. Description of Activities |
| | |   i.   Subgranting |
| | |   ii.  Technical Assistance and Support |
| Organizational Capacity | 35% | A. Ability to Provide Program Oversight |
| | | B. Ability to Provide Fiscal Oversight |
| Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy | 20% | A. Budget and Program Design |
| | | B. Match Sources |

Panels will utilize Panel Consensus Calls to discuss each application and come to agreement on the content of the Narrative Assessment for each category, the Rating for each category, the Overall Appraisal Statement and the Band in which the application will be placed. When completing this form, the LR should rely on four primary documents: 1) the application being reviewed; 2) the SIF Review Notes page from each panelist; 3) the SIF Notice of Federal Funds Availability (NOFA); 4) the Consensus Rubric at the end of this form.

**Please complete the following steps:**

1. For each of the 3 categories the LR should:
   a. **Write a 3 – 5 sentence Narrative Assessment** reflecting the panel's assessment of the quality of the response in the category being assessed; it is important that this narrative include brief summary information, but more importantly, the panel's evaluation of the application's quality.
   b. **List the application's significant strengths and weaknesses and annotate each.** Each significant strength or weakness **must** be supported by **at least one** of the Eligibility or Application Review Criteria that were in the SIF NOFA. (criteria are included in this form)
   c. **Taking into consideration** both the Narrative Assessment and the listed strengths and weaknesses, **select a category Rating** by checking the appropriate box.

2. **Complete the Overall Appraisal section.** In this section, you will:
   a. Provide an Overall Appraisal Statement; and
   b. Select a Consensus Band that represents the quality of the application as a whole. The Bands are described in the Overall Appraisal section at the end of this form.

# PROGRAM DESIGN (45%)

The **Social Innovation Fund Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) states** that the following will be considered when reviewing an applicant's Program Design.

## A. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

*The Corporation asks applicants to use a thematic approach in describing their proposed investments in community organizations. As established in the Act, there are two basic operational models of SIF intermediaries. The first is a SIF that will operate in a single geographic location, and address one or more priority issues within that location. This model is referred to as a "geographically-based SIF." The second model is a SIF that will address a single priority issue area in multiple geographic locations. This model is referred to as an "issue-based SIF." The Corporation will assess whether the application properly proposes goals and objectives as either a geographically-based or an issue-based SIF.*

i.      *Geographically-Based SIF*

ii.      *Issue-Based SIF*

## B. USE OF EVIDENCE

## D. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

i.      **Subgranting**
a.      *Applicants must describe the process by which they will competitively select their nonprofit community organization subgrantees, and, if applicable, the process by which they have pre-selected some subgrantees. Specifically, applicants must describe how their competitive subgrant selection process will ensure a portfolio of subgrantees that are innovative nonprofit community organizations serving low-income communities and that possess:*

ii.      **Technical Assistance and Support**
a.

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**Provide a panel assessment of the application's PROGRAM DESIGN as follows:**

- **Write a brief Narrative Assessment;**
- **List the Significant Strengths and Weaknesses (annotate your comments by referencing the applicable Eligibility or Application Review Criteria); and**
- **Select a Rating for this section.**

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## Panel Narrative Assessment

This applicant already is a recognized leader in the evidence-based workforce development arena. This proposal builds upon a current project where Jobs for the Future is driving one of few successful models in workforce development. No one organization can led this critically important national effort, yet this applicant is choosing to invest in a collaborative approach supported by major stakeholders. The program design is a superlative model that captures best practices, theory, and rich experience. The strategy is based on establishing workforce collaboratives in high growth sectors as a sustainable pathway out of poverty. The program identifies with evidence gaps and holes in workforce education and provides a capacity building-centered approach to address those needs. They will identify subgrantees that will scale-up based on performance and new start ups in areas previously underserved by workforce education. The approach is evidence-based, the capacity building and technical assistance a prime part of the program design that helps build sustainable organizations to carry out workforce education. The application details a rigorous procedure for subgrantee selection based on subgrantee experience, record, and capacity to engage in data-driven performance and evaluation. In sum, the program design excellent in all facets.

## Significant Strengths

Excellent job of laying out the needs as well as the target geography and presenting a rich empirical case statement of need and what is know about what works. The statistical snapshots of areas likely to be served is an example of a data-filled understanding of geographic context. Measurable outcomes are clearly laid out. Theory of change is stated clearly. "Job Training that Works: Findings from the Sectoral Employment Impact Study" presents powerful data for the sector-based strategy, and this is a study that includes random assignment and assessment of appropriate outcomes, like increased income and work. Its dual orientation to employers and workers vividly illustrates their experience and insights learned in this field. Independent evaluation.

## Significant Weaknesses

None

Select a Rating for PROGRAM DESIGN (double-click in the applicable box and select "checked")

☒ **Excellent**          ☐ **Strong**          ☐ **Satisfactory**          ☐ **Weak/Non-responsive**

# ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY (35%)

The **Social Innovation Fund NOFA states** that the following will be considered when reviewing an applicant's Organizational Capacity.

## A. ABILITY TO PROVIDE PROGRAM OVERSIGHT

*In evaluating your organization's ability to provide program oversight, the Corporation will consider:*

i.       *The extent to which your organization has a sound structure including:*

ii.    *Whether your organization has a sound record of accomplishment, including the extent to which you:*
   • ;

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**Provide a panel assessment of the application's ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY as follows:**

- **Write a brief Narrative Assessment;**
- **List the Significant Strengths and Weaknesses (annotate your comments by referencing the applicable Eligibility or Application Review Criteria); and**
- **Select a Rating for this section.**

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**Panel Narrative Assessment**
The applicant is the lead organization for several national workforce development initiatives. By virtue of their experience and track record, the applicant is the "natural" choice to drive successful innovation further through broader dissemination and replication, refinement, and rigorous assessments. This capacity will be built into partnering organizations. The applicant learns from its experiences and develops a continuous learning cycle for greater and more efficient innovation. This organization has capacity to match the complex scope of the proposed project. The proposal includes intensive coaching to replication sites, in addition to extensive technical assistance. Experience in delivering technical assistance, and the prominence of technical assistance in the program design, is a stand out feature of this proposal.

**Significant Strengths**
Project is core to applicant's mission. Multiple staff involvement across diverse task areas demonstrates understanding of project complexity and implementation. Excellent capacity for evaluation, having done many studies previously and with using outside evaluations.

Individual coaching to sites embeds the core innovation in grantee's DNA.

Robust and well-thought out program of technical assistance that includes much of the staff devoted to this project, policy experts, researchers, trainers, and outside consultants.

**Significant Weaknesses**
None

**Select a Rating for ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY** (double-click in the applicable box and select "checked")

☒ **Excellent**        ☐ **Strong**        ☐ **Satisfactory**        ☐**Weak/Non-responsive**

## COST EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY (20%)

The **Social Innovation Fund NOFA states** that the following will be considered when reviewing an applicant's Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy.

### A. BUDGET AND PROGRAM DESIGN

*In evaluating the cost effectiveness and budget adequacy of your proposed program, the Corporation will consider:*

i.

ii

**Provide a panel assessment of the application's COST-EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY as follows:**

- **Write a brief Narrative Assessment;**
- **List the Significant Strengths and Weaknesses (annotate your comments by referencing the applicable Eligibility or Application Review Criteria); and**
- **Select a Rating for this section.**

**Panel Narrative Assessment**
The applicant has constructed a budget appropriate to the scope and robustness of its program design. The investment seems more than justified by the need for workforce education and evidence-laden promising payoff. The proposal identifies and resources specific budget items for technical assistance and evaluation, which reflect their core importance to the innovation. The budget presents a highly cost-effective method to replicate sector-based, collaborative workforce education through a balance of dedicated staff expertise, consultants, and external evaluators.

**Significant Strengths**
Significant and notable community partners matching resources. This visibility, likely, will lead leverage remainder of needed match.

Dedicated resources for continuous learning through Partner Meetings and Peer Learning Meetings, which align program design to budget resources.

Robust, dedicated resources set aside for external evaluation of project initiative.

**Significant Weaknesses**
Robustness of project and budget raise a potential question of ability to find the needed resource match. Not sure this is a weakness, per se.

**Select a Rating for COST-EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY** (double-click in the applicable box and select "checked")

| ☐ Excellent | ☒ Strong | ☐ Satisfactory | ☐ Weak/Non-responsive |

# OVERALL APPRAISAL

**I.** **Provide a 3 - 5 sentence Overall Appraisal Statement of the application taking into consideration:**

Overall, this is a superlative application in all aspects. The excellence is matched by the significance of the need. This is a needed and wise investment, precisely the kind of Social Innovation Fund investment that will model future capacity building collaboratives. Most important, this project embeds a proven innovation into practice.

**II.** **Select one Band for this application** (double-click in the applicable box and select "checked")
**Ensure that your selection is supported by your panel's Narrative Assessments, significant strengths and weaknesses, Ratings, and Overall Appraisal Statement. Take into consideration the weighting of each category.**

☒ **Band I (Excellent):** A comprehensive and thorough application of excellent merit with very significant strengths and no/minimal significant weaknesses.

☐ **Band II (Strong):** An application that demonstrates overall competence and is worthy of support, where the value of the significant strengths outweigh the identified weaknesses.

☐ **Band III (Satisfactory):** An application with potential, where strengths and weaknesses are approximately equal. However, some fundamental weaknesses have been identified.

☐ **Band IV (Weak/Non-Responsive):** An application with very significant weaknesses and no/minimal significant strengths that have been identified. This option may also include an application that is non-responsive to the published criteria.

# CONSENSUS RUBRIC

Please use this Consensus Rubric as guidance when selecting your Ratings or Bands.

**BAND I (Excellent)** — *A BAND I rating reflects that the application is compelling, consistently excellent in quality, and addresses all requirements; thereby showing the highest potential for success.*

The **Excellent** application consistently:
✓  Goes beyond what was requested, showing that the applicant has anticipated issues that may arise.

✓  Provides a thorough, detailed response to all of the information requested.

✓  Provides a clear and highly compelling description of how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.

✓  Provides clear evidence to support all objectives of this section (no assumptions are made).

✓  Supports ideas and objectives with comprehensive plans explaining and connecting ideas to objectives.

**BAND II (Strong)** — *A BAND II rating reflects that the application is solid, good-quality, and has great potential for success.*

The **Strong** application:
✓  Provides a response to all of the information requested.

✓  Provides a realistic description of how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.

✓  Explains most assumptions and reasons.

✓  Supports ideas with comprehensive plans, examples, or outlines.

**BAND III (Satisfactory)** — *A BAND III rating reflects that the application generally meets requirements for a reasonable chance of success, but is neither especially strong nor especially weak.*

The **Satisfactory** application:
✓  Covers most of the information requested, with a few exceptions.

✓  Is sometimes unclear how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.

✓  Makes some assumptions and leaves some reasons unexplained.

✓  Supports individual ideas with plans, examples, or outline.

**BAND IV (Weak/Non-responsive)** — *A weak/non-responsive rating reflects that the application is below standard especially in ability, skill, or quality; indicating that this application will most likely not succeed as described or is not responsive to the application requirements.*

The **Weak/Non-responsive** application:
✓  Does not provide one or more key pieces of requested information.

✓  Gives an unclear description of how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.

✓  Gives many unsupported assumptions and reasons with little or no connection to objectives.

✓  Tends to "parrot" back the question, rather than answer and explain it

✓  Makes many assumptions and many reasons are not defined.

✓  Did not connect the activities to the anticipated results.

✓  Does not address or respond to the requirements/conditions of the NOFA.

✓  Proposes activities that are not consistent with the NOFA and application instructions.